

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 13244

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TAGS: PFOR MORG NATO GR
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF DEFENSE ON GREECE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH
NATO AND ON RESTRUCTURING OF ARMED FORCES

REF: A. USDAO ATHENS IR 6 837 0105 76, 9 APR 76;
B. USDAO ATHENS IR 6 837 0312 76 DTG 201238Z SEP 76;
C. USDAO ATHENS IR 6 837 0361 76 DATED 13 DEC 76.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. RESPONDING IN PARLIAMENT ON DECEMBER 10 TO QUESTIONS
FROM LEFTIST OPPOSITION DEPUTIES CONCERNING GREECE'S
RELATIONSHIP WITH NATO, DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF STATED
THAT GREECE'S ARMED FORCES ARE, AND WILL REMAIN, UNDER
NATIONAL COMMAND, "BUT, IN THE EVENT OF A GLOBAL CONFLICT,
GREECE -- AS THE PRIME MINISTER HAS DECLARED -- WILL
FIGHT ALONG WITH HER ALLIES." AVEROFF NOTED THAT SOME
GREEK OFFICERS HAVE REMAINED AT VARIOUS NATO COMMANDS
IN ORDER TO INSURE GREECE'S ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON
TECHNICAL ADVANCES AND NEW WEAPONS AND TACTICS. HE
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CONCLUDED, "THEREFORE, OUR POSITION IS THAT WE SHALL

REMAIN IN NATO UNDER A SPECIAL STATUS, SUCH AS TO ALLOW US TO DRAW WHATEVER PROFIT WE CAN, NOT TO WEAKEN OUR POSITION AND STRENGTHEN THAT OF OTHERS BY OUR ABSENCE, AND TO ENABLE US TO FIGHT WITH OUR ALLIES IN CASE OF SOME SUDDEN WORLD CONFLICT."

2. DURING THE SAME EXCHANGE, UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER DEPUTY VASILIOS PENTARIS CHARGED THAT AVEROFF WAS ENCOURING ROYALIST ELEMENTS IN THE ARMY AND THAT THE ARMY CONTROLLED THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE OTHER TWO ARMED SERVICES. HE ASKED WHEN THE PROPOSED BILL RESTRUCTURING THE ARMED FORCES TO GIVE GREATER INTERNAL AUTONOMY TO THE THREE INDIVIDUAL SERVICES WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO PARLIAMENT.

3. AVEROFF REPORTEDLY DENIED THAT HE IS OR HAS EVER BEEN A ROYALIST AND SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN WAITING SINCE LAST SUMMER FOR TENSIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND GREECE TO SUBSIDE BEFORE SUBMITTING THE BILL. HE REPORTEDLY PROMISED THAT THE BILL WOULD BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT NEXT WEEK.
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4. DEFENSE ATTACHE SOURCES (SEE REFS) INDICATE THAT THE NEW BILL ON REORGANIZATION OF THE SERVICES WILL BE A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE ARMY WHICH WANTS TO RETAIN PRIMARY CONTROL AND THE TWO OTHER SERVICES WHICH ARE DEMANDING AUTONOMY. CONSIDERABLE AUTONOMY IN BUDGETING, PROCUREMENT AND ECONOMIC AND LOGISTIC MATTERS ON A SERVICE BASIS IS ANTICIPATED. THIS IS NOT EXPECTED TO EXTEND, HOWEVER, INTO THE FIELDS OF ADMINISTRATION PLANS AND OPERATIONS. THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HELLENIC FORCES (CINCHELFOR), CURRENTLY A FOUR-STAR ARMY OFFICER, IS EXPECTED TO RETAIN CONTROL OF THE THREE SERVICES AND ANSWER DIRECTLY TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE ON SUCH MATTERS. SERVICE CHIEFS MAY BE ALLOWED TO DEAL AT THE UNDER-MINISTER LEVEL LOGISTIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS, BUT ON ALL OTHER MATTERS OF POLICY THEY WILL CONTINUE
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TO WORK THROUGH THE CINCHELFOR. WHILE TODAY THE ARMY DOMINATES THE SUPREME HELLENIC ARMED FORCES COMMAND (SHAFC), ANOTHER COMPROMISE MAY BRING NAVY AND AIR FORCE OFFICERS INTO MORE KEY POSITIONS AT THAT LEVEL.
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